To Laurence James

compliments of the Author

Walter Jay

New York - 25 April 1930

MEMOIRS OF WALTER GAY

LE BRÉAU

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HAVING passed the allotted three score years and ten of the Psalmist, I feel that I ought to leave behind me some account of an interesting period in our country's history, which comparatively few people now living can remember: the Far West in 1872-73, and Paris in 1876. There have been three great events in my life: going West in 1872 at the age of sixteen, going to Paris in 1876, and my marriage to Matilda Travers in 1889. I have never regretted any of them.

I was born in the old town of Hingham, Massachusetts, in 1856. My ancestor John Gay came to America from England in 1639. He settled at Dedham, Massachusetts, and his descendant Ebenezer Gay, born 1696, moved to Hingham in the eighteenth century, and was minister of the Old Ship Church there (a reproduction of which exists at the Metropolitan Mu-

seum). He officiated for seventy years, and built the old Gay house at Hingham, which is still standing and is occupied by my cousin Martin Gay. Hingham has changed little since my childhood. My father and mother, perhaps unwisely, did not remain there, but moved to Dorchester when I was nine years old. Though so near Boston, Dorchester was real country at that time, with country places, woods and fields, all of which have disappeared; it is now quite different. In my childhood days in Hingham I was much attached to my uncle Allan Gay, a landscape painter of note, who had lived much abroad. He had gone to Paris in 1848, and I learned much from him, sitting by his side while he painted and hearing him talk about France, whither I longed to go. From this old uncle, I got something which the schools never gave me in after life. My uncle was one of the first Americans to study art in Paris; he knew Millet and the masters of the Barbizon school.

To go back to my own life; I grew up thinking a great deal about art. I went to the Roxbury Latin School, where I used to cover my books with drawings instead

of studying. In 1872, when I was sixteen, an opportunity came into my life which changed all my plans. My uncle Charles Blake, a retired naval officer who had been wounded in the Civil War, decided to go West and start a ranch in Nebraska, then a wilderness, a land of Indians and of buffalo. He asked me to go with him. I jumped at the chance. My occupation was to herd cattle, and it was there that I learned to ride and shoot, sports from which I have profited all my life. As I look back at all this, it seems to me that I must have had the most indulgent of parents, for they apparently let me do pretty much as I pleased. So one fine day in the early spring, I took the train for Omaha, and from there another train to North Platte, my destination. The Union Pacific Railroad had been built but a few years, and things went slowly then; the journey took five days. When I arrived at North Platte in the middle of the night, it was quite cold; I remember sitting over the stove until morning in the little station house, and at seven o'clock my uncle came to fetch me. I noticed that he carried a revolver and, afterwards, that everyone else did. The single street of North Platte was com-

posed of one-story houses which had sprung up beside the Union Pacific Railroad only a few years before; they consisted at that time principally of saloons, and they were particularly animated on that morning, as a band of Sioux had just arrived to trade their buffalo hides for knives and other articles, chiefly whiskey. Even then whiskey was forbidden to them by law, to which the settlers paid little attention, though they sometimes paid dearly for their law-breaking, for the Indians, after copious libations, became crazed with excitement, and would shoot up the town. I was delighted to see the Indians, who appealed to my imagination. They were certainly a fine lot of men, well-mounted, in their native dress of buckskin, which has long since disappeared. Among them was a young white man with long hair, dressed like the Indians. When a little boy he had been kidnapped, and had grown up with the tribe which had adopted him. He had married a squaw and preferred his present life. But we had work before us. The load of timber which was for our shanty had to be driven out by us to the land my uncle had purchased, where I lived for the next year. With this first load of wood we built

a shanty where we lived for three weeks, until the arrival of the cattle from Missouri, after which we built the house.

My uncle managed to hire a wagon and pair of horses, for his own had not arrived; but was unable to get any men to help him, there being very few people as yet in the town. We lived in the shack for three weeks, until the cattle were driven up from Missouri, and cooked our own food, while the wolves howled around us at night. As I look back on this period of my life, I see things long passed away. Bands of Indians used to appear at nightfall at the ranch, asking permission to camp there for wood and water, which they did, much to the alarm of some of the men, who looked with an anxious eye on our horses. The horses were removed from the lower ground nearer to the house, where they were picketed within a few yards of the door. There were some eight or ten of them, and one of us had to sit up all night to watch; a questionable precaution for if the Indians had really made up their minds to take the horses, we could not have prevented it. As the youngest of the party, I was generally de-

puted to parley with the Indians and got on fairly well; my youth seemed to interest them. They were armed with bows and arrows; the points of the latter were of iron, replacing the stone arrow-heads used by their fathers. They were, however, beginning to use rifles, and a few of them even had Winchesters of a late model. But they stuck to their bows and arrows for economy; also they were a silent arm. Red Cloud, a famous chief of the Sioux, spent a night at the ranch, accompanied by his band of about one hundred Indians; this was a great occasion. They were on a punitive expedition against the Pawnees, who had passed here two nights before. They were in their war paint, a wondrous combination of red, yellow and black; one half the face was of one color, the other half of the other. On my expressing my admiration for his get-up, Red Cloud presented me with an arrow taken from his quiver of deerskin. They sat around their camp-fire for a long time, and passed the pipe of peace with us. In the morning they all left before dawn, to our great relief.

About this time, 1872, I killed my first buffalo. He

was an old bull that had separated from the herd. He was seen grazing on the prairie just below the ranch, and I profited by an undulating piece of land to get within less than two hundred yards of him. It was a great triumph, and his skeleton, remaining for years just where he fell, was known as Walter's buffalo. In the month of January, 1873, my uncle went east to buy cattle, leaving the ranch in my charge. Just at this time I had an opportunity to join a small party of hunters, three besides myself, who had planned an expedition to hunt buffalo about one hundred miles west of the ranch. There was no time to communicate with my uncle to get his consent, so I threw up everything and risked it; I knew that I might never get another such chance. The hunters had seen me shoot with a shotgun (the only one in those parts) and I was the only one in the country who could shoot flying; this seemed to impress them, as they shot only with rifles; at all events I was glad enough to go. As the hunting was all done on horseback, I took the best pony, a half-thoroughbred, a little fiery for such work as I found afterwards, but still I got on pretty well, and stood the racket. After a long

and severe training in herding cattle, I rode pretty well. This was necessary in hunting buffalo. The party that I met at the Slough (Fremont's it was called then, after the explorer) consisted of two pretty rough Westerners, a graduate of Cornell, who was anxious to study the fossils and had found the bones of a prehistoric buffalo, and myself, making four. We each had a pony, and besides a light wagon, a pair of ponies as well, and a shelter tent. Our destination was about a hundred miles west, where, according to rumor, great herds of buffalo had made their appearance. How this news got to us I am unable to say as there was absolutely no communication from one part of the country to another at that time.

We went west over the old trail which the forty-niners took when they went to California. The Union Pacific Railroad was to the north of us; we went parallel to it but further south, below Julesburg and Cheyenne. There were no houses on the way, though the second night we passed the remains of an old ranch, long since abandoned, but to my surprise one room still had the roof left. This room was occupied by a refugee

from justice, an outlaw who was living in this far away place where the sheriffs could not get at him. We saw what his business was in an inner court, where several valuable horses were at liberty. In fact he was a celebrated horse-thief. The man was a desperate character, who had several murders on his conscience, and who satisfied himself that we were not after him before he let us come in. Then he was evidently rather glad to see us, as he never had any visitors and was, I suppose, lonely and glad to hear news from the outside world.

It was a picturesque place, and I have always regretted that I made no sketch of it; the walls of adobe were covered with skins of animals which in that dry climate were perfectly preserved in the open air. He spent his time hunting, or rather trapping, when not engaged in adding to his string of horses, and in the early spring got rid of his pelts. Over the fireplace hung an old rifle, a muzzle-loader. This gun he never took down, and never would until he could fire it into the body of some enemy whose name he mentioned and who was after him. I never knew what became of either of them; they, perhaps, met violent deaths. We went

on, preferring to camp under the wagon than to stay under the roof of such a man, and next day came upon fresh tracks of buffalo. We did not, however, see any of the beasts for days to come. I remember the next night we came upon another hut — the last that we were to see — with a wilderness beyond. The owner of this, though not as notorious a character as our last, was pretty rough. He gave us hospitality and whiskey. This, I fear, was ill repaid, as our men had a row with him next day which might have resulted in bloodshed. I felt rather ashamed of the way we acted, but I was only a boy and had nothing to do in the matter.

All this time our journey had been along the south bank of the Platte. On the morning of the night which we spent in the last hut, the party decided that it would change its course, and instead of going due west as we had been doing, we would strike southwest in the direction of the White Man's Fork, a branch of the Republican River, where we hoped to find buffalo. Before going, we laid in a small supply of wood, scarce even in those days, for the camp fire, not being sure of finding it south of there. We also cut slabs of ice from the river,

which was to be melted up for water later, as there was no prospect of finding any in those parts that was not saturated with alkali.

We filled up the cart pretty well with these additions, which forced us to go slowly afterwards. As the men were going down to the river for ice, they came upon two black-tailed deer in the brush-wood, one of them they were lucky enough to shoot. This was the first game we had got, though we saw antelope constantly, whole herds of them, but always out of range. We had no time to follow them up. As to wood, the only trees we saw on the trip were on the banks of the Platte, and on the long narrow islands that skirted the shore. These were generally cottonwood and some of them were quite tall. There was a quantity of brush-wood along the river, full of grouse of, I believe, the sharp-tailed variety. We got two or three of these, shooting them while sitting.

There were no prairie chickens in that part of the world in my time, though I believe they came later with the civilization and crops, which did not exist when I was there.

On the day after leaving our late host (we were now about 100 miles west of our starting point), we again saw signs of buffalo, this time very fresh, and on the next day we came upon them all at once. I shall never forget the excitement when, on climbing an elevation, we saw a small herd of them in the canyon below us. We immediately pursued them.

My pony, which had never seen a buffalo, dashed at them splendidly at first, but when he found what they were, he refused to approach very near, in spite of my frantic efforts to make him. The important thing in buffalo hunting is your horse. The hunters want one that will ride right into the herd, where they pick out the cows and calves, the only ones that are really good eating.

The hides were taken only when they were exceptional, owing to the time it takes to perform this operation. The beasts are very heavy, and at that time had little value except for the meat. We wasted as few as possible, though many hunters used to kill for the fun of it. We might have killed many more of them had we wanted to.

The greater part of the meat which we did not keep was shipped east. This involved a journey north to the Union Pacific Railroad when we had finished our hunt some days later. We were gone three weeks in all and had the most beautiful weather all the time, cold at night but dry, with a bright sun in the day time. To go back to the hunting. The first herd we saw might have contained twenty head. Later we came upon somewhat larger ones. The greatest sight was one evening, when it was too late to do anything, we looked across a canyon and on the other side saw buffalo, then more buffalo, and still more beyond. They were a long way off, and we were well occupied as it was with what we had about us. We never got to the big herd; but it made a great impression upon me.

About Indians, it was a curious thing that in all our trip we never saw one, though our men said they must have been well aware that we were about, as they always follow the buffalo, which they hunted sparingly, never wasting the bodies as the whites did. We had positive proof that they knew about us. One morning when there had been a light fall of snow in the night, on

going forth from our tent we found the footprints of moccasins not far away, and on another occasion found a camp fire still smoking. They generally, I believe, at this time killed their buffalo with bow and arrow, which made no noise and economized their ammunition. We slept in a shelter tent, all four in a row on buffalo skins, and took turns in making the fire. One morning it was my turn, and I had just left the tent in search of firewood while the rest of the men hadn't got up, when rounding a bluff in a narrow path, I came face to face with a big bull buffalo. I was unarmed and he had no idea of getting out of my way, so I rushed back to the tent to get a rifle, but of course was too late; the buffalo had disappeared.

For various reasons, we now decided to change our headquarters. My companions, all older than myself and having hunted buffalo for years, surprised me by telling me that they had no idea where we were; we were south of the Platte, that was enough for them; no one had a compass or map, but there was one rule they always went by and that we could rely on: all the canyons went in the same direction, however undulating

the country might be; that is, to the north, towards the Platte. This rule, however, changed when one struck south towards the White Man's Fork, a tributary of the Republican River.

We were, or had been, as they calculated, a little west of Nebraska on the border of Wyoming for a short time, and then crossed into Colorado in the direction of the Black Hills, though we never got so far in that direction, which was no longer buffalo country. I remember we came upon the tracks of a bear in this region but did not follow it up, to my great disappointment.

All through the trip we had been among the hills or bluffs as they were called, coming out on the prairie or lower grounds only occasionally; there was nothing to indicate where we were or even what state we were in.

One night we lost the trail, and the others left me alone with the wagon and horses on top of a small hill while they went to explore the canyon below to try to find it. In order to locate the spot where they had left me, they built a fire which I was to keep burning brightly. It didn't occur to them at that time that this fire, which could be seen from afar, might be noticed

by the Indians. I felt very much alone. They were gone a couple of hours, but finally found the trail in the dark.

Our provisions had now dwindled down to very restricted rations, practically only the bread or biscuits which we made with our limited supply of flour, and buffalo meat. We never got an antelope, though there were plenty of them; it meant giving up the buffalo and attending to them specifically, and we hadn't the time. The grouse were so tame that one of them used to perch on the roof pole of our tent and paid no attention to us. When we met them in the sage brush, they hardly got out of the way, they had never seen a man before. It seemed a pity to kill them, and no sport. I had to now and then, but I spared the one that used to perch on the tent. We found the antlers of elk on several occasions, but never saw one.

We saw no ducks or geese, this not being the season. I had already killed great numbers of these at the ranch at North Platte. Coyotes were everywhere, whole bands of them. They lived at this time on the remains of buffalo. We paid no attention to them; but we killed a grey

wolf, that was worth while. They came generally from the hills. I saw them, nevertheless, at North Platte.

As I didn't want to be a burden to the party in the way of food, and also as my uncle must be expecting me, I decided after having splendid sport to leave and go back to North Platte, where my uncle needed me. They were all much surprised at my step and begged me to stay on, declaring that there was food enough, and that it would be a dangerous journey to undertake. I had made up my mind, however. I suppose it was partly the spirit of adventure that made me take this step. I wanted to see how it would feel to be wholly dependent on myself. I wanted the thrill, for which I paid dearly, but finally got through safely.

I waited until the party had gone north again. We did this in a few days, not finding buffalo where we had expected. I bade them all goodbye on the bluffs leading down to the valley of the Platte, and made my way alone, with only a few biscuits in my haversack and a bit of cold buffalo meat for a three days' journey. I did not want to take more, and so deprive them, though I knew these would last only a couple of days. I counted

on the hospitality of the railroad stations on the north bank of the Platte. To reach them, the river had to be crossed; it was frozen over only in places, and shallow, with islands at intervals. I profited by these as well as I could, but there were a few places where it was necessary to swim my horse. Then the ice was treacherous and kept breaking through. In one place my rifle slipped off the saddle to which it was attached, and disappeared before my eyes in the river. This was terrible, for without a rifle on this wild trip, what was I to do? By the greatest chance, the strap of the rifle floated up toward the surface, and by putting my arm down in the ice-cold water, I was able to pull up the weapon, none the worse for the bath.

Under the circumstances, crossing this river, which was half a mile wide, was a most difficult problem and took me over two hours; at times I thought of abandoning it, but I had nothing else to do. Finally I got across and started on my travels. I thought my troubles were over, but they had only just begun.

Every nine miles along the Union Pacific Railroad, the guards had little houses, and I had counted on their

hospitality, as was the custom in the country in those days, though I had never been in those parts before. I had no money with me, but I thought I would be treated as we treated everybody who stopped at the ranch — given a meal. This, I found, was not the case; whether I struck a particularly mean class of men, I don't know. I had been so long in crossing the river that it was already late. I wanted to hurry on to the first house some miles to the east, but an unexpected thing occurred. My pony, who had carried me so bravely through the hunts, now began to show signs of weariness. He went more and more slowly and finally almost stopped. He wasn't well, I could see that, though I didn't know what the matter was until afterwards. He had an epizoötic malady that affected almost all the horses in the country at that time. I nevertheless got to the station house — a one room affair. The occupant, a surly brute, came to the door, which he opened only a few inches suspiciously, and then closed it in my face when he heard what I wanted. The only time in my life that I felt like a beggar.

I was in a pretty plight, with night coming on, a

tired horse and no shelter, but there was nothing for it but to walk on nine miles further, where I was not at all sure of being well received. How I got over those nine miles in the night on foot, leading a sick horse, I don't know. But I finally got there. This time, to my great joy, I found a man who appreciated the situation, and took me in like a friend. I was grateful indeed.

He had a couple of rooms, one of which he offered me, and in spite of the late hour managed to heat up something for me. He gave me good advice, told me whom to apply to and whom to avoid on the road. He gave me a description of a camp a little off the railroad where a trapper lived, who would surely put me up. I travelled all next day without food, a greater part of the time on foot on account of my horse, and arrived at the trapper's hut at nightfall. The place was empty to my great surprise and the door unlocked, so I walked in. There was something uncanny about it. The evening meal was prepared, that is, the hunter had cooked some biscuits possibly the day before, and laid them (a good many of them) on the table, and there was a jug of molasses. All this was very tempting, but I didn't yield to

it until very late when I felt the trapper would not be likely to return; then I pitched in and ate up all the biscuits. I don't know how many, but I had a boy's appetite.

I slept on his bed and put the pony in a sort of outhouse, where I found some fodder and oats, all open; anyone could have helped himself. I thought that a man like this, with such a trusting nature, ought to be rewarded in some way, and I wished I could have done it, but I could do nothing except to write a short note of apology, which I left on his table giving my address, etc.

I slept soundly, but having already eaten everything, I was obliged to start without breakfast. I went all the next day without food, arriving at the ranch late at night. I was pretty well used up when I arrived and went to bed. I had been gone three weeks and had been through a great deal. It was a wonderful experience. My uncle hadn't arrived, which was just as well. When he did come back, he overlooked my running away, and when the rest of the hunters returned in a week's time and presented him with buffalo meat, it all passed off very well.

Among the neighbours was Buffalo Bill, William F. Cody, whom I used to see occasionally. He was employed at that time as a Scout in the service of the United States Army. When he was at home he lived at Fort McPherson — fourteen miles from our ranch. He was a real man, as fine looking as he was brave. He certainly had killed more buffalo than any living man, but there were others who had killed more Indians than he had; one of them, Jack Omahondra, was a picturesque character, but not of the same class as Cody. I also saw General Custer, who passed by the ranch conducting a band of Indians to a reservation, given them by the United States Government.*

We shot, trapped and poisoned many coyotes near the ranch, and a few grey wolves, mountain wolves they were called. For firewood, we had to go a long way off, up the canyons, where a few, very few trees were found which were fit to burn — cedars. It was on one of these occasions that I killed a wolf. We used to go up one day, sleep under the wagon, and come back the next. I en-

* General Custer was brutally massacred a few years afterward with all his troops, having been led into an ambush from which hardly anyone escaped. This took place in 1876, after I had left.

joyed these outings, one got so close to Nature. I remember one bright moonlight night, when, as we were about to go to sleep and I was looking out from under the cart, a small owl flew into the stunted tree which overlooked us. I could almost touch him. It was so bright that I could see his eyes looking at me. He stayed there all night and seemed to like having us there.

We found that the cattle my uncle bought (they were half blooded stock) required less care after the first few months than he expected. I was therefore able to devote myself wholly to shooting. There were principally ducks and geese, and I killed quantities. I have preserved the Game Book of this time. It shows that, though I killed a great many for food, I never went in for making the big bags that have been made since, for I would have had to throw them away, there being no one to give them to.

The only time the cattle gave us real trouble was when there was a hurricane or severe storm. Then on several occasions they stampeded and left the country altogether, some few being found thirty miles away on one occasion. I remember going out in pursuit of these

truants and finding myself twenty miles from home one night, having been separated from my companions. The only thing for it was to sleep there, right on the prairie and in winter. I always carried a blanket and another for the pony, so I picketed him near me and went to sleep. We were soon awakened by wolves who hovered about us all night. I saw them at times, but only for a minute, then they would disappear in the darkness. There was no danger, for I was all ready to shoot if they had come near; but the pony didn't like it and whimpered to me, and came as near to me as his picket rope would allow.

The climate was so dry that I suffered no inconvenience from sleeping out in this way. In the morning I found myself in a strange country among the hills; but found my way back to the ranch in good time. In the late summer of 1873, there was a prairie fire, not a small affair such as we often had seen, but the real thing, the entire country in a blaze. We were sleeping peacefully one night and were awakened by a strange light in the sky to the west of us.* It was so far away

* My uncle always considered that this prairie fire was started by

that it seemed incredible that the fire should ever reach us, but being fanned by a strong wind, it came nearer and nearer. We were all at work in a few minutes, had the horses out, and were plowing a double furrow to the west of the corral and house — the former being below us, and the house on an eminence. We had burned between the furrows but hadn't time to include two large haystacks, which were further to the west. In the meantime, we began to see and hear myriads of wild cattle, deer and antelope fleeing before the blaze, which was just appearing on the horizon. It was an extraordinary spectacle. The flames were miles away even then, but the animals seemed to know what was coming and fled before it. We thought we might still have time to save the haystacks, and got as far as making a furrow, all working like tigers, when the hopelessness of the situation dawned upon us and drove us back to the corral, and then the whole storm came upon us. We were in the midst of the flames. I believe it was about two in the morning when the full strength of the fire tore by

Indians whom we had refused hospitality the night before. The latter had come so often, in such numbers that we found it impossible to give to all of them. They were too many.

us. The haystacks, representing so many weeks of hard work, went in a jiffy, that is they caught the flames, but continued to burn and smoke for days afterwards.

We were all dead tired but spent the rest of the night putting out small fires that sprang up in every direction from the sparks of the big fire. There was great difficulty in restraining the cattle and horses, but we managed somehow to save them in the green oasis which we had preserved by burning to the westward.

In the morning it was a sad sight to see the entire country, which had been so verdant the night before, become a blackened waste; nothing outside of the immediate buildings was saved. Other haystacks, that were far off on the prairie, had gone too. That we expected. But we had hoped to save those that were close at hand. We saved, however, the house and cattle and horses — that was something.

After the fire, the entire country remained a blackened desert until the next spring.

I left the ranch with much regret, after the year had expired. My uncle wanted me to remain, at least to try another year, when he would have given me an interest

in the business, but I had made up my mind to become an artist, and if possible go abroad.

On my return, I made the acquaintance, or rather renewed it, of John Johnston the artist, who was very kind to me. He, with his sister, both pupils of William H. Hunt, had started a studio, on Tremont Street, with living models, 1873-1874. This I joined, and went there every day for a year, not only profiting by their advice, but now and then having the advantage of criticism from Hunt himself. I also went to a night class at the Lowell Institute for Drawing.

About this time, I took up the study of flower painting and acquired a certain skill in this branch of art. In the next two years I thought of France a great deal, but I couldn't afford to go there as yet. What led me finally to take this step was that Mr. Hunt after seeing my studies, sent for me and said that the time had come for me to go abroad. This was all very well, but I hadn't the wherewithal, though I had already begun to sell my flower pictures pretty well. The little money I was able to make was not enough to take me abroad but the small success I had made induced kind friends to help

me. At last I managed to get the means, or the promise of it, to go to France for two years at least, perhaps three.

I went by way of England, in April, 1876, in a slow old ship that took thirteen days to go from New York to London. There were Cunarders at that time, but I couldn't afford them. On board ship, I made friends, whom I saw afterwards in London. Among them was an old French gentleman, who kindly gave me letters of introduction to Courbet and other painters. I delivered one or two of these, though as a rule I avoided this way of meeting people. It was, however, more of a custom to deliver letters in those days than it is now. As to Courbet, I never presented my letter to him, for the very good reason that he was still in exile for having pulled down the Column Vendôme. He had become a Communist. He was in Switzerland, where he died a year or two afterwards.

I shall never forget my impressions of coming abroad for the first time, in fact one can never experience that feeling twice. I spent three happy weeks in London studying the pictures at the National Gallery, and tak-

ing notes of what I most admired. In London, I saw some relations, the Blakes, who had lived there many years and who were kind to me. Then on to Paris, where I expected to meet my friend Johnston. I went to the little hotel, at 15 rue Jacob, where he had a room, but he had left it to go to the country. I now live on the rue de l'Université, only a few hundred yards from the little hotel, where I began life in Paris in 1876. Having no other place to go, and not knowing a soul in Paris, and unfamiliar with the language, I decided to stay in that hotel until Johnston came back. I went every day across the foot bridge over the Seine to the Louvre, not having a soul to speak to. Paris was a very different place then from what it is now, life was much simpler. Americans had not begun to come in any great numbers, very few lived here — none of whom I knew.* There were seven or eight American students in all in Paris, but when I arrived I knew none of them. At Bonnat's, there were one or two Americans only. There

* Mr. Washburn was our Minister. There was a small English colony just before my time, partly on account of the court, but with the advent of the Republic there were few of them left. I remember being taken to one or two houses to see some pictures.

were no American newspapers here then. *Galignani's Messenger* existed. A paper called the *Morning News* came long afterwards, and many years later the *New York Herald.*

Sargent came to Paris in 1874, two years before I did. A year afterwards Carolus Duran's atelier was formed, of which Sargent was a member. Julien's came afterwards. I met John Sargent at Bonnat's for the first time when he used to come to the night school. He was then a slender young man, very shy. We saw at once that he was going to excel in his art. There were no difficulties for him. As I had come to France to work, I didn't make any attempt to meet people, in fact there were very few to know, at least among the Americans. I spent my first three weeks going every day to the Louvre, having made up my mind to know it thoroughly. In those three weeks, I don't remember speaking a word of English. I lived in the simplest way. The concierge of our little hotel cooked for the guests. It was a sort of pension, and he served us in a little room off the courtyard. I was pretty lonely. There were only French people there; one or two were students, but no

one spoke English. I had hoped in this way to pick up a little French, but it was slow work. One day Johnston appeared and insisted on my going back with him to Auvers-sur-Oise, where he was painting. He, in company with one or two others, had gone there to study with, or at least to be with, Daubigny, who was considered a great man then. We lived at a little *auberge* on the river. The weather was beautiful, and we painted all day, at times in company with Daubigny. The latter almost always painted in a boat; and, when the day's work was done, I remember his throwing his paint brushes in the bottom of his boat which contained water. There they remained until the next day, and being still wet he was enabled to go on using them without washing — a simple method, which I never imitated. He was a quaint old man, dressed like a peasant, wearing a blue blouse and sabots. One day we admired a sketch which he was painting, and after finishing it he brought it all fresh to the hotel and presented it to one of our party; very nice of him and much appreciated.

After a week or two at Auvers, I made up my mind

to go to Barbizon, at that time full of artists. The great Millet had died only a few months before and his personality was so great that, hearing so much about him made me almost believe that I had known him. Millet was one of the few men I admired at that time, and whom I continue to admire even at this late day with the same enthusiasm. Corot the same; but many of the Barbizon school whom I used to care for, I cannot like in the same way.

Diaz was still living at Barbizon, so was Jacques. I remember a year or two afterwards seeing his funeral in Paris.

The great object of my going to Barbizon was to know William P. Babcock, who had known or seen all the great painters of his period, knew more about the old masters and had more tradition than almost anyone I have ever met; he was a link with the past. From his excessive shyness, he never took the place he merited, was almost a hermit, living at Barbizon in a very modest way and allowing no one to come to see him; but surrounded with beautiful works of art and books, which he managed somehow to get, though he had

very little money and rarely sold a picture. He was the traditional type of artist; he belonged to an epoch when the elect took up art or became collectors. He was Millet's intimate friend (Millet died in his arms), and could relate endless anecdotes and sayings about him, and describe his method of painting. He had known Rousseau, Diaz, Jacques and Daumier — had seen or known Delacroix and even Ingres, the "père Ingres" as he was called. I also knew Miss Cassatt at this period.

At the period that I describe, the Barbizon school was in its prime; it had not begun to go out of fashion. Two great names remain, however, Millet and Corot.

Manet was working at this time and doing great things, and so was Monet, but we never heard much about them — we heard about Regnault, Fortuny, Degas, who was just beginning to be known to a very few, but it was not until the first exhibition of Impressionist pictures on the Boulevard that they all began to be known. Whistler exhibited at the same time his *Portrait of his Mother* and other beautiful things. The latter had a reputation from the first, though of course contested by many, at least among the people who were

appreciative, and all these men appealed to the real artists even then, but it was a long time before the public acknowledged them. I remember the little color shop of Ray and Perraud, on the corner of the Notre Dame de Lorette, where we used to go for our painting materials and where there were often pastels by Degas, which we artists were all crazy about, but which nobody would buy. They were offered for 1000 francs each and some even for 500, but none of us had any money. I moved over to Montmartre the second year, in order to be near the atelier of Bonnat, where I was to study for the next two years — very different from the Montmartre of today. There I had to work all day. In the afternoon before dinner, we sometimes went to the Café de la Rochefoucauld, and another café, where we saw Puvis de Chavannes, Manet, Boldini, George Moore, and others. I was only a youngster, so didn't try to know them, but I knew Degas, went to his studio, and he was even good enough to come to mine and gave me much good advice. I saw a good deal of him in those first few years. The friendship waned afterwards when I moved to another quarter, and also because it was very

difficult for anyone to know him for a long time on account of his peculiar temperament. He was very difficult, very witty, but his wit left a sting. I saw him again, the last few years of his life, when he came to an exhibition that I was having at Petits, when he was as cordial as he used to be in old times.

Many years afterward, I knew Whistler, who was also very difficult. He lived in London, which he finally left, and came to live in Paris. I remember once going to his studio (the White House) when he lived in London. He was very nice to me and when he settled in Paris we saw a great deal of him, and fortunately never had a row. He lived at 110 rue de Bac, and before leaving London had married. His studio was outside. I remember going there one day, when he was painting from a model. To my surprise, he apparently had great difficulty in drawing. He had begun a hand which he could not seem to get, and asked my opinion of it. He used sometimes to take eighty sittings on a portrait, and on this one he had already worked a fortnight on the hand, and it was no further advanced than when he started it. I mention this to show that even the great

have their difficulties. I was lucky enough about this time to purchase two delightful little water-colors from him. It was a privilege to hear Whistler talk about painting, and though at times he was pretty severe on his contemporaries, he was on the whole just to the really great. He didn't like rivalry, however, and his brilliant wit (he loved a fight) served him on all occasions to flay his enemies.

Whistler's wife died a few years after their marriage, and he took it very hard, for they had been very happy together. We had, as everyone else had, great sympathy for him at this time. He was in England when this took place, but there was something about France which seemed to call him, and he came back to work and almost finished his days here, though he was destined to die in England after all. I went to see him in London, a short time before he died. It was a very touching visit; he was so glad to see me, but we both knew that we were not to meet again and that the end was near. I remember he would not let me go, but held on to my hand. I sat down with him again, and he still held my hand. I had to tear myself away finally.

To go back to my early life in Paris. The first two years I worked at Bonnat's and made progress. After the second year, the Master chose one of my studies of the nude to hang on the walls of the atelier, beside the academy by Ingres, where it remained until the atelier was broken up years afterwards. This was considered a great honour. Bonnat wanted me to study Velasquez, so I went to Madrid. In the third year, 1878, I went to Spain in company with Alfred Collins. Few Americans had been to that country in those early days. Among the painters, I think Miss Cassatt, whom I afterwards knew, and Dannat were the only ones. The latter I met at Madrid. Velasquez was a revelation. After a month's study at the Prado, where I made a number of copies of the great man, we went to Andalusia for a month, living outside Granada near the gypsy quarter, where we painted outdoors in the loveliest old terraced garden. The gypsies used to come and pose for us, and I might have done some interesting work had I been a little more advanced in my studies. The color came quite naturally but the drawing was not as sure as it should have been. I lacked experience. I made up my mind on

this trip to go back for another year to the schools until I was more sure of myself in this respect. Bonnat, whatever he might have been as a colorist, was a strong draughtsman, and insisted on drawing being the foundation of all art.

We made a trip on horseback to the Sierra Morena mountains from Granada, being gone three days. At that time, travelling across country was sometimes dangerous on account of bandits, and the week before the stage coach to Ronda — on a much frequented road — had been attacked, but we were in a more out of the way part and no one troubled us. We started, I remember, before daylight to gain time. We were four on horses, including a guide. A pack mule carried the provisions. As we passed by the caves where the gypsies lived, we found the latter lying outside in the moonlight sound asleep; they, as far as we could see, were not awakened by our passing. They were a weird sight and looked as if they all were dead.

We went on and on in a beautiful wild country. The few peasants that we saw on the road looked at us wonderingly; there were so few travellers in those parts.

After a while we seemed to have left civilization behind. On the first day we had passed through small hamlets with houses made of straw covered with mud, with no doors to speak of. Afterwards, as we approached the mountains, we saw only a few mountaineers. Everyone was armed, picturesquely dressed in leather with a few silver buttons. It was a joy to me to be on a horse again, and the wild life appealed to me.

At nightfall we arrived at a cluster of huts half way up a mountain. There we were to sleep, at least a part of the night. The house, an old one built more solidly than the rest, had but one large room with an earthen floor reminiscent of a seventeenth century Dutch picture. This served the double purpose of a stable and sleeping room, for we all slept on the floor with our feet to the fire, the horses being behind in the same room. We were again awakened before daylight in order to make the ascent; our guide was anxious to do this before the sun appeared, which would melt the snow and render the crevasses dangerous. We went up very slowly in the dark at first, then the light began to appear, a glorious sight on the snow-covered mountains. Vegeta-

tion began to disappear, and snow was on the ground although it was spring. Then the snow began to be deep in places. We followed no path at all, it was all haphazard, it seemed to me, but our guide knew his business. At last he told us that we could go no farther on our horses, which we had to abandon to a mountaineer. Then we continued our journey on foot (the mountain was 11,000 feet high), but before we got to the top we began to be very tired. Collins, the strongest man of the party, declared he could go no farther, but we persuaded him after a short rest to go on. I say short rest, because our guide insisted on our hurrying, said we would be in danger otherwise. Well, we finally got to the summit after a terrible pull, when we were all so exhausted that we couldn't look at the magnificent view (at least for some time), but threw ourselves on the ground to rest. Finally we came to life again, and then such a view as greeted us was well worth the journey.

Granada, so far away, seemed at our feet. In the distance we could have seen Valencia but for a mountain. Far away at the south we saw the blue Mediterranean

all illuminated by the sunlight. Gibraltar could be seen, and, strange to say, a long white line on the other side of the Straits was Tangiers.

We went back happily. It was easier to go downhill than to go up, and we had time to study the country. We found the lair of a wolf on the mountain, and the place where he had left his shape the night before. Eagles were seen several times quite near. Later we saw a strange sight: It was when we were on our way home the next day. An eagle flew slowly across our path with a great animal in its claws. It was a young lamb, which the mother bird was carrying to its young. I have seen a good many wild things, but I never saw anything like this one.

We got home safely and continued work; but were all laid low soon after by the vile food that we were obliged to eat. When we got over this attack, we left for Paris. The year after this, I exhibited my first picture at the Salon, *La Leçon d'Escrimé;* the background was partly from souvenirs of Spain. It had a success and encouraged me, but I did not sell it, much as I needed the money. I was inexperienced and a Frenchman, a

nobleman, said he would buy it at the end of the exhibition. In the meantime, the great firm of Goupil came to me and offered to buy it. This I refused, having already promised it. At the end of the exhibition, I looked up my Frenchman, who declared that just at that moment he hadn't the funds, so the picture was not sold at all. The Goupils said I had refused it once, and they wouldn't go back to it. The picture remained on my hands for a long time, but was finally sold.

About this time I began to be rather short of money, that which I had received from home being nearly expended. I economized in every way, however, so that it would go farther. I had by this time left the school, to my great regret, but as I look back it was perhaps a fortunate thing.

On this, my third year, letters began to come from America warning me that it was time for me to go back. As I had been promised three years, I thought this very hard. Then came a final letter, which informed me that the cheque (a small one) enclosed would be my last, and that I *must* go back. This was a great shock, a really serious state of things, for I had few friends, and these

latter as poor as myself. I hadn't begun to go into the world at this time and I knew nobody who could help me.

I made up my mind, in spite of all this, *not* to go home. My education, for which I had come so far, was not completed and though things looked desperate, I didn't despair. I remember getting so low at this time that I used at times to cook my own food, a few baked potatoes cooked in my stove and now and then a bit of meat. I enjoyed this and didn't suffer from it. I never actually went without a meal, though I came very near it at times. When things were about as low as they could be, a fortunate circumstance out of the clear sky occurred. A London dealer, who had seen my picture at the Salon, came to see me and, although he didn't buy the big picture, he ordered a small one which by great good luck he sold, when he gave me another order. The sale of these two pictures kept me along through the winter, and paid my studio rent. As poor as I was, I never got into debt. I worked very, very hard, and during those first years stayed in Paris all summer doing pot-boilers, when I would have enjoyed the country so

much. The few friends I had were forced to go without me, and there wasn't a soul left in Paris that I knew. I managed to support myself by my painting for eleven years in this way, though there were long periods when I didn't sell a picture. I never told anyone how poor I was, not even my own family. I exhibited every year at the Salon and my pictures began to have success; one of my pictures was reproduced in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts* and other good periodicals. The Salon at that time was a very different thing from any exhibition that has taken place since. There was only one Salon, a small one, and they were very particular whom they admitted. A success in the Salon was a lasting thing, it meant something. Nowadays there are three or four Salons and twenty or thirty exhibitions going on all the time and all the year, so that to exhibit in them means nothing. In the old days, the opening day of the Salon was an event, everybody talked about it, even your concierge. There was an enthusiasm about it — the *déjeuner* at Ledoyen's was traditional, where all the artists who could afford it lunched together, and the heroes of the hour were cheered when they came in. I remember

seeing a successful artist who had won a first medal, carried on the shoulders of his confrères. There seemed to be less jealousy than you hear of today. At all events, there was nothing like the Salon in the world. Artists who were rivals forgot their grievances for this one day. Fashion also shared in the fête, and long lines of private carriages waited before the doors of the Old Salon des Champs Elysées, and the great dealers from London, New York and Munich made their plans to be there on the first day, when they would make their choice of the pictures. I used to see Sarah Bernhardt, Réjane, Robert de Montesquiou, Alexandre Dumas, the President of the Republic, many of the Government, everybody in fact.

Those were happy days for the painters, the successful ones. In those years they built their *hôtels* in the Parc Monceau, and the avenue de Villiers quarter. Alas, they thought it was going on forever, but fashion changes and their pictures are no longer bought. There were too many artists, and too many exhibitions. The public was no longer interested, and the big studios and houses which the artists built are no longer lived in

by the artists, but divided up into apartments. The artists with few exceptions — fortunately there are a few — have no longer the position which they had in those days. Nowadays everybody paints.

To go back to my life. I met at Bonnat's a compatriot, Stanley Mortimer, who admired my work and wanted me to give him lessons. This I did gratuitously, taking in payment the use of his studio, a big one, and we painted together for a number of years. This arrangement made it unnecessary for me to have a studio of my own, which I finally gave up though I always had my own living apartment outside, which made me independent. Stanley Mortimer is still living, almost the last of my friends of those early days. After a time he returned to America, and I took another studio, being well launched in my career by this time.

My pictures were beginning to be known. I painted large pictures then, of figures, and they were exhibited not only in Paris, but in Munich, Berlin, Antwerp and elsewhere, receiving medals.

MARRIAGE

In April, 1889, the happiest event of my life occurred. I married Matilda Travers, daughter of the late William R. Travers of New York, and I can look back upon forty years of felicity. The wedding, which took place in London, was solemnized in the little Catholic church, Warwick Street, Regent Street. Besides Mr. Junius Morgan, father of Mr. Pierpont Morgan, an old friend of my wife's parents, there was only a gathering of the family, many of whom had crossed the ocean to be present. There were present my wife's mother, Mrs. William R. Travers, her brother William R. Travers, Mrs. George R. Fearing, Mr. and Mrs. William A. Duer, my brother Harry Gay, and my cousins, the Frank Blake family of London. Our friends and relations gave us cheques as wedding presents. This wise form of gift enabled us to exercise our own taste, so we formed a collection of old English silver, to be had at that time at reasonable prices. At Oxford we picked up a complete set of blue-and-white china, so our table

was furnished with souvenirs of family and friends.

England was always the mother country to us both; there was even a question of our settling there. But we decided to live in France, and we have never regretted the choice.

In the first year of our marriage, we rented a little *hôtel*, with studio and garden, in the rue Ampère, where we lived for twenty years, travelling for two months every summer. Before 1895, we had visited Normandy, Brittany, the great Gothic cathedrals within eighty kilometers of Paris, and Touraine. Henry James' *Little Tour in France* had inspired our travels. The trains were inconvenient, the inns detestable, but the monuments and the landscape made up for any material drawbacks, and our great luxury was that we met no tourists, for the only travellers in France, at that period, were the *commis-voyageurs*.

In 1889 my large figure picture of *Le Bénédicité* was bought by the State and placed in the Luxembourg Museum. There it remained many years until it was transferred to the Museum at Amiens, where it now remains permanently. In after years, eight more pictures

were purchased by the State. Most of these hang in the Jeu de Paume, the annex of the Luxembourg Museum, in the Tuileries.

About the year 1893, I began to exhibit in other places besides Paris. I became a member of the Royal Society of Water Colour Painters at Brussels, was elected a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters in America; became a member of the Executive Committee of the Société des Amis du Louvre; also of the Committee of the Luxembourg Museum. I became Foreign correspondent and Advisor of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

I received about this time the following honours:

Gold medal, Vienna, 1893
Gold medal, Antwerp, 1894
Gold medal, Munich, 1894
Gold medal, Berlin, 1895
Silver medal, Budapest, 1895

In 1895 we decided to pass a certain part of the year in the country. We rented a small place at Magnanville, near Mantes, and there I painted my first interior. It was a little old manor-house, very inconvenient and

dilapidated, but it had old *boiseries* and was paintable. The following season we rented another place, also uncomfortable, and this one unpaintable. This house was on the Seine — there was a small shoot, but not enough to keep us there.

In 1897, we rented a larger place: Fortoiseau near Melun, in Seine and Marne, in the neighbourhood of Fontainebleau forest. About 1895 I began to give up painting large figure pictures. Medals and honours were all very well, but to obtain them I was obliged to make too many concessions to the public in the way of subject and of treatment. Besides I felt that I could be more personal in small ones. Added to this I had a sentiment for the past: it meant much to me. So I painted many studies at the Château de Fortoiseau, without exhibiting them, showing them only to sympathetic people who could understand what I was trying to do. I was searching for the spirit of empty rooms — interiors.

PURCHASE OF THE BRÉAU

In 1905 we rented the Bréau, from the Comtesse de Gramont d'Aster, and bought it in 1907.

The property consists of 500 acres, woods and plain, 300 of which are inside a wall. Besides this I have a certain amount of land outside the park for partridge shooting.

The archives of the château, which we have, go back to 1710, stating that the latter was built in 1705 on the foundations of a ruined château. It is surrounded by a moat on three sides. The château has been added to by its various proprietors. The Comte and Comtesse de Gramont bought the place in 1884, made a collection of eighteenth century furniture and *boiseries*, which, added to their own, with their family portraits, give the impression of a family seat. We were fortunate enough to buy practically all this, Madame de Gramont taking away only a few pieces. She left the portraits, and even the bust of Henri IV in the ante-chamber. The "Vert galant" distinguished the family by throw-

ing his royal pocket-handkerchief to a Gramont ancestress, the beautiful Corisande, and she picked it up. When this adventure is royal and remote, it is a source of pride.

THE CHASSE

ALTHOUGH the Bréau had the reputation in old times of being a *belle chasse*, I found on taking it that, like most of the shoots of those days, it was over-rated, and really very small in comparison with others. I therefore got rid of the old keeper, who never could have been any good, and built up the shoot, owing to a very skilful man who replaced him. In the twenty-two years that he was with me he made the shoot what it is today.

For many years I have shot with Clarence Mackay in Scotland.

THE WAR

AUGUST—SEPTEMBER, 1914

THE war came on so suddenly, that nobody was prepared. The closing of the banks, with a moratorium at first, made it impossible to draw any more money. We then lived on credit as everybody else did.

On the 1st of August two words were telephoned over from the Préfecture at Melun which meant everything: *Mobilisation Générale*, which ordered every man on the place to leave within twelve hours. There were nine of them in all, including the gardeners and keepers. When the last one left, we felt very much alone. How to run that large place, or even how to live there without servants, was a problem, but we managed to do it somehow. One of our old gardeners, who had been with us twenty years was allowed to stay, being past the military age, forty-six years at that time but forty-eight afterwards, and we were thankful to have him. Our motor was confiscated, as were the one or two good horses; we never saw our horses again, but

our motor was returned to us after the war (five years later.)

On the 2nd of September the Government left Paris for Bordeaux, a precautionary measure, as Paris was menaced. This move was followed by all the Embassies, with the exception of the American. We were more than ever proud of Ambassador Herrick, who remained at his post. He had a very great responsibility, for besides looking after all the stranded Americans who found themselves in Paris, unable to get to America, he had the German Embassy to attend to. Their interests had to be in the hands of a neutral power, and Herrick was the only man to do it. All this time we were at the Bréau, without means of communication, though frantic cables came from America as to our welfare. We had the good luck to find a Swiss, formerly our chauffeur, and by his nationality, not mobilizable. He appeared one morning with his tumble down motor and we were glad enough to hire him, though it was next to impossible to get petrol.

About this time, or a little before, the plans for the battle of the Marne were made at Melun at the Château

of Vaux-le-Penil, signed by General Joffre and General French who had made his headquarters at the château. The latter came out several times to see his troops quartered near the Bréau.

At the beginning of hostilities, we offered the Bréau to the Government for a hospital — the offer was accepted and the authorities came to look over it, but decided, afterwards, not to take it, the place being too isolated, too far from a town. This decision was a great relief to us. We remained at the Bréau throughout the war, with rare visits to Paris where we experienced the night raids, and the bombardments of the Grosse Bertha afterwards. As the enemy approached we profited by the hired motor to send off the young women and children from the Bréau to a safer place near Bourges. It seemed incredible but we managed to pack eleven people (many of them children) into the motor. They arrived somehow and remained until immediate danger was over. No motors, at this time, were allowed to leave Paris, and I wanted to bring down my precious drawings, for Paris was expected to fall. I had the greatest difficulty doing this, but finally got an authorization to

use a motor for one day only. It is questionable how much good this would have done as the Bréau was also exposed to danger. However, I got them out of Paris. The enemy, by this time, had lists of the collections in Paris and it was said that my drawings were among them. I hated to think that they might end their days in Germany. On the 1st of September, 1914, at the Bréau, we had become isolated from the rest of the world — no letters were allowed to reach us — the telephone was cut off. Telegrams were strangely enough allowed to be sent, at least for a time. We had a small amount of money left and this was husbanded for several months, but finally gave out. A farmer, whom I hardly knew, came to me at this time, saying he knew I must be short of funds, as everybody else was, and of his own accord offered to lend me whatever I required up to 10,000 francs. This incident touched me. By this time, 3rd of September, everybody with the exception of three families, had left the country; the families that remained were the Gontaut-Birons at Dammarie, the Ganays at Courance and ourselves. (The Gontauts spent a week at the Bréau, when their house was not

ready to receive them). The Marquis de Ganay with his three sons, all went to the war. The Marquise came to see us during the critical time (the 1st of September) and kindly offered us money (the sinews of war) and gasoline, both almost impossible to obtain; we were able to get on without borrowing, however.

An incident that pleased us was the arrival of an armed military motor one morning, with Robert Bacon, the former Ambassador, who dropped in to see if we were still alive. This was the only visit we had had, except that of Madame de Ganay, for several weeks, as only military motors were allowed on the roads.

The Gendarmes — or rural police — were now suppressed and their places were filled by the military; this made us feel a little safer, as the country had not been properly protected for some time, all the able-bodied men being away at the front, and it was known that there were many spies about, some of whom we saw — one big motor being constantly on the road, apparently with women in it. As I saw them several times I was able to pronounce to a certitude that they were men in disguise. They were arrested in an hotel at Melun by

the proprietor, who suspected them and discovered them through a window over a door when they were in the act of shaving. I never knew what became of them. Another spy, whom Matilda saw, was taken at Melun station, and another was shot close to us in the river as he was trying to escape.

Then, in the Forest of Fontainebleau, on two occasions, small bands of Uhlans were captured by the soldiers and brought with their horses to Melun. No one ever knew how they crossed the river, then guarded.

It was extremely difficult to go to Paris at this time. Motors were not allowed on the roads and the trains were crowded with soldiers, so that if one was lucky enough to get on a train, one had to stand all the way for hours.

On the morning of the 5th of September, 1914, we were awakened by cannonading. We thought at first that it was thunder, but there was a clear sky, so there was no doubt about it, the Germans were approaching and much nearer than we had any idea, for the wretched reports in the local papers made out that the enemy was much further away. The papers purposely suppressed

the truth so as not to excite the people and were always talking about the fighting in Alsace or some other far away place — when the enemy was at our door. We were defended by British troops at this time. General French was established at Melun where he and General Joffre planned the battle of the Marne. In the Château of Vaux-le-Penil the document was signed. The German plan of campaign was to enter Paris on the northern side, towards Senlis and Compiègne — as a matter of fact they got to Lagny, their nearest point, only fifteen kilometers from Paris.

When they were repulsed from Compiègne, they took their course in a southeasterly direction with the intention of taking Melun, our railroad station, and then going on to Paris from there.

I said we were defended by British troops. The latter kept their munition-wagons close to the Bréau, 150 of them, and I used to go every day to see the Tommies, who were glad to speak English with me. They remained with us for four days and then followed their army. These first troops were mowed down by the Germans, and many of the British in their first engagement

were brought back wounded to Melun. I saw a number in the hospitals of Melun.

The Bréau had now become a sort of storehouse to preserve the furniture and belongings of our neighbours who had left. One entire room was filled with the furniture of the Château de la Rochette. The owner, although Mayor of his village, left in the beginning, partly on account of his large family. There were nine children at this time out of twelve, and he was excusable in not leaving the family there unprotected.

Then Mrs. Ridgway, the nearest neighbour, who lived in our old place, Fortoiseau, left many valuables with us, among them seven cases of silver. I helped our faithful keeper bury these, and they remained underground for more than a year.

We buried all our guns, all the clocks, all, in fact, that were not sealed up in the walls by the mason before he left for the war. The most precious thing we buried was the memoirs written by my wife. We unearthed them as soon as the enemy had been repulsed.

The sounds of cannon now became louder all the time from the 5th of September as the enemy ap-

proached; we saw many evidences of the battle. One day an English soldier on a motorcycle stopped at the Bréau, fresh from the fighting line. I remarked that he was carrying two rifles. He replied that the second one had belonged to a comrade, who had been shot down at his side only two days before, and that he did not want the gun to fall into the hands of the enemy, so he was bringing it back. He described the situation in a most graphic manner: that the Germans were much too strong for them, and that they were now only twenty-four miles away from the Bréau, and to be prepared to receive them at any moment, perhaps the next day. As we Americans were neutral, we felt fairly safe, at least for our lives, but it was a dreadful thought. About this time came a messenger from the American Embassy. Our Ambassador, in spite of all his preoccupations, had found time to write a letter, with the great seal of the Embassy and signed by the Ambassador, stating that the Château and domaine of the Bréau were the property of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Gay, both American citizens, and must be respected. We never used this, fortunately, for the Germans never got to us, but they were

very close and we owed much to our Ambassador for his kind thought of us.

The refugees continued to come past the Bréau in fewer numbers now. They had been forced to evacuate before, but those who came told harrowing tales of the misery they had been through; how some had had their houses and barns burned the day before and were the last of the families which had been permitted to remain; how they had seen the battle and had difficulty in getting away; all this within an hour or two's distance from where we were standing. They confirmed the report of the English soldier that the Germans were expected at Melun next day.

This mercifully never happened, as by a miracle they were turned back by the battle of the Marne, from which date the firing ceased, or became very faint. We could hardly believe it, but this was the turning point of the war, although much fighting took place before it was accomplished. The victory of the battle of the Marne was for Joffre and the Allies.

As we were so near the fighting line, or where it had been for the last week, we actually went over the battle

field four days after the fighting, going from Melun in our hired car, without permission, and meeting no one to oppose us. In fact, it was a deserted country that we saw with traces of the battle everywhere. The ground where the British troops had camped was perfectly distinguishable from the place where the French had slept: the French so much more uncomfortable, while the English had a few little comforts unknown to the French. Not a sound did we hear, everyone had gone and not a soul to direct us or to prevent our going on, though we had no permission.

In little villages near Coulommiers, the houses were deserted, shells had spattered the walls and a church steeple had been dislocated; but so far nothing tragic had happened apparently, although the trees along the road had lost their tops from shells. There was no trace of trench warfare in these early days of the war and the fighting had taken place in the old-fashioned way in the open. They had no big guns (one of the reasons why they had come so fast), and their big impedimenta, which played such a part later on in the war, had been left behind. It was largely hand to hand warfare, though

the 75's played their part as well. It was quite evident where little engagements had taken place by the empty shells, the broken gun carriages and the dead horses. The fresh graves generally surmounted by a bayonet on which the *képi* of the fallen soldier, sometimes that of an officer, had been placed. This was before the helmet had been adopted and many of the soldiers wore the old-fashioned red trousers — all told the story. We did not see evidence of so many Germans having fallen as we did of the French, but they were doubtless there as well. They naturally hadn't the time to put names on the graves; they were buried where they fell, a great number along the road. In the direction of Provins we came to a wood. For the first time we encountered soldiers who were guarding it. These sentinels would not allow us to go through this wood as they said there might be German soldiers in hiding there since the last battle four days before, so we had to go around it. As the sentinels became fewer and fewer, we made up our minds to risk it and go in and see what happened, but we saw nothing. Having picked up a few empty shells and other things for souvenirs, we turned our steps in the direc-

tion of home, just a little disappointed over not having seen more. We had met no one all day whom we could have asked questions except the sentinels, and they dared not talk, not knowing who we were. They were perfectly right. On the way back, we suddenly came upon signs of recent fighting, rifles and knapsacks on the ground and the wheat all trampled down, deserted farms, some of them burned and all quiet — not a soul. It was almost uncanny. Finally we came upon a human being, an old man half dazed, who told us what had happened four days before. It had been bad there, he said, but it was worse at other places further on. This was at Courtaçon, where we arrived later. We found what had been a flourishing village with picturesque old houses, razed to the ground, every house in the long street burned to ashes, and smoke was still coming up from the cellars. The inhabitants, old women and a few old men, were standing in the middle of the street not knowing what to do, with no place to sleep. They told us about a young boy who had a military uniform on, but who had not been to the war, who was found in the village when the Germans arrived and im-

mediately shot; we were shown his little grave all fresh. It seems that the Germans had been driven back near there and revenged themselves by burning up the whole place, but the outrageous manner in which they did it was shocking. It was the Imperial Guard who directed it. They took women from the next village and forced them to march in front of the soldiers when they made an attack. After the fight they retreated to Courtaçon, where they installed themselves comfortably in arm-chairs in the middle of the street to watch the fire. They then commanded the villagers to fetch firewood and set fire to their own houses, many of them ancient, where the families had lived peacefully until then.

After this we returned to the Bréau saddened by what we had seen. On the way back, we stopped at the Château of Lagrange-Lafayette, to see what had become of our friends, the Marquis and Marquise de Lasteyrie. We found this stately old place empty and deserted, not a soul to be found. We could look through the windows and doors into the château; the shutters were not even closed, and it had every appearance of having been vacated in a hurry. We heard afterwards

that on the approach of the Germans they all left, as the Marquis de Lasteyrie being Mayor of his little village of Courpalay, would certainly have been taken as a hostage.

There had been a little skirmish in the village but no harm had been done; the Germans were in a hurry.

In passing through Melun on the way home, we were more than ever struck by the abandoned look it had in these first days of the war. The Préfecture had been transferred to Lyons, the banks as well; most of the shops were closed, those that were not had nothing to sell, the inhabitants had fled from panic, and the town was very dirty.

An incident worth noting took place here: the Mayor of Melun, seized with fright at the prospect of the invasion, had actually given orders to blow up the bridges. He himself fled, not very far, however, so that General French was able to find him; he found him hiding on our side of the river. General French took him roughly by the collar and dragged him some distance, and brought him back to his post. This was told us by Marshal French himself, who lunched with us at

Bréau some years after. He told us that if the bridges had been destroyed, it would have prevented his army getting away in case they had been forced to. At this time it was next to impossible to get food at Melun; two armies had passed through there, and Melun was our market town. We had, fortunately, laid in a stock of provisions and for meat we had the rabbits and other game of the park. Severe measures were now taken for circulating in the war zone. We were told many times that it was no place for us, as there was bound to be fighting in the country about us, but as we were never actually ordered to leave, we stayed on. It became necessary to have a military permission to go as far as Melun; this had to be renewed every week, and as to going to Paris, this was extremely difficult. Men for work on the farms were practically impossible to get; sometime after that, however, we were obliged to take German prisoners which the Government provided. They did very well on the whole. I never talked to them, nor allowed anyone among our friends to converse, much as they sometimes wished to find out certain things. It would have been misunderstood by the

French who might have thought all sorts of things about us. The head-keeper discovered one of them deeply absorbed in writing, as he thought, in a part of the park at a distance from his comrades. He approached very softly behind him and found that he was making an elaborate map of the property with the château and outbuildings all carefully traced. He snatched the drawing from the prisoner and destroyed it, otherwise it might have been sent back to Germany. I regretted afterwards that he hadn't kept the document to show to me. Things went on in the park that we knew nothing about. One morning, the keeper who was given permission from time to time to come back to the Bréau, on account of his age (he was forty-seven), and look after the agricultural part of it, discovered, in a thick part of the woods, two German prisoners. They said they had been hiding in the park for two days and had had nothing to eat (they had a little coffee which they were heating over a fire when caught). They made no resistance and the keeper brought them to see us; we gave them a good meal and kept them over night until the arrival of the military authorities, when they

were carried off. They had escaped from some prisoner's camp.

The airplanes had begun, by this time, to take an important part in the war. The Escadrille Lafayette of which Victor Chapman became such a hero, did splendid work.

Victor was a friend of the family and, before his last exploit, happened to dine with us in Paris on the last night before going to the front on the journey which ended so fatally. As he went downstairs after dinner, we had a presentiment that we should never see him again, which proved only too true. Although not as numerous as they became afterwards, there were a certain number of airplanes that passed over the Bréau, some of them were Germans and some were French, but mostly the latter, and we once assisted at a fight between two of them. We never knew which survived.

Afterwards, in 1917 and 1918, when the attacks and night raids were made on Paris, the German avions passed constantly over the Bréau, as it was on their way to Paris, but strangely enough they never dropped bombs on the place. The reason for this, as far as we

could make out, was that they preserved their bombs, which were precious, for the great city. Nevertheless, some of the villages near us were bombed. We happened to be settled in Paris when the first raid took place; we were reading aloud after dinner, reading King Lear, a fitting accompaniment to a raid, in company with LeRoy King, a Shakespearian, when at about nine o'clock, the most awful noise took place; it was the siren announcing the raid. We hardly realised what it meant; but a few minutes later the guns began with their barrage fire just outside Paris, trying to prevent the enemies' approach, to no effect, however, for soon the shells began to fall, some of them very near in our quarter. The reason for this was that we were surrounded by ministries, the Ministry of War, the Ministry of Marine. All these were aimed at particularly. The Ministry of Marine was the next house to ours in the rue de l'Université.

On the war maps of Paris, published at that time, were found the concentration of the shots which fell on Paris, and by far the greater number fell in our quarter. When they bombarded the Ministry of War, in the

Boulevard Saint Germain, close to us, the avions came right down over the Boulevard, dropping their shells when they got to the Ministry. The number of dead that were found in the building was never published, but it was very serious. Friends who lived on the rue de Lille, in sight of the building, saw a great number of bodies carried out.

One night, not the first one, we heard such a crash that we thought our own house had been struck. It was very near, striking at the end of the garden. Monsieur Doumic, the academician, had just left his bed to go down to the cellar, when a shell came into his room and on to his bed. Strangely enough the shell did not explode, as sometimes happened.

As my wife and I were leaving the house one day, I believe it was in 1918, when the Big Bertha was doing its daily work, we heard a shell strike on the corner of the rue de l'Université and the Boulevard Saint Germain. It took the top off the roof of the house, causing it to fall against the Ministry of War. As it was while we were on our way, and as we knew that another shot could not arrive before half an hour, we drove through

the smoke which hung over the street for a long time and saw the dismantled building, one of the fine houses of the quarter. One can still see its new roof. One morning, as Walter Berry was crossing the Boulevard Saint Germain, a shot from the Big Bertha struck the top of a fleuriste, so close to where he was, that a piece of plaster struck him on the leg doing him no harm. It is surprising how relatively few people were killed in Paris, either by the raids or by the Big Bertha. The greatest toll from the latter came from the Church of Saint Gervais, when fifty-five people were killed, among them an American, a cousin of Sargent. On the corner of the rue de Bac, three hundred yards from our house and the Boulevard Saint Germain, two policemen on duty were killed in one raid. We heard the shot and the next morning I went to see the spot where the poor fellows were killed.

One afternoon at the Union Club, we heard the Big Bertha strike very near; some of us rushed out to see the damage. The shell had struck the Hotel de Calais carrying away a part of the façade, which was lying in the middle of the street; in the midst of the débris were the

remains of a cab and the dead horse, the driver had been killed at the same time, and his body carried into the hotel. They told us that two more people had been killed in the hotel, which seemed very few in such a frequented street.

The four years of war will never be forgotten by those who lived through them. There were three events in it that brought it home to Americans living in France: they were the arrival of American soldiers in 1917; the arrival of Wilson in 1918; and the Victory Parade in 1919, when the American soldiers came marching down the Champs Elysées — a sight never to be forgotten. The rhythm of their march, the dignity of their bearing were revelations to us all and showed the intensive training that they had been through.

On the 14th of July, 1917, we went to the Picpus Cemetery and heard the now famous *mot*: "*Lafayette, nous voilà.*" General Pershing, whose splendid work through the war cannot be lauded too highly, was credited with saying this, but it was really said by Mr. Stanton, who made an excellent speech after the soldiers had filed past the tomb. It was all very impressive.

President Wilson arrived in 1918. No sovereign ever had such a reception as was given him. He was looked upon by the French as a saviour, not only of France but of the world. The French did not know all that time that President Wilson did not have the Senate behind him, so that he did not represent the people. Comparatively few knew this: Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Briand, but the great masses knew nothing about it until afterward.

We were offered a window on the first floor of a house on the Avenue des Champs Elysées to see President Wilson pass. I shall never forget his triumphant smile as he greeted everybody and bowed right and left. People little realised the trouble that would follow.

In 1919, after the war was over, came the victory parade, a most moving event. Thousands of troops of the Allies that had fought together came marching down the Champs Elysées, one country at a time, preceded by the war cripples on tricycles or on crutches; there was hardly a dry eye. We saw the parade from the balcony of Mr. and Mrs. Tuck. The crowds were so great that many poor people spent the night in the

street so as to be in time in the morning. We left home at 5.30 a.m., and were about one hour crossing the Champs Elysées on foot; no carriages being allowed anywhere near the Avenue. When the American troops came by with General Pershing on a grey charger, the emotion was at its height, for our boys had fought the war to a successful finish.

Now the war is mercifully over and I don't think we could stand another. We have lived twenty-three years at the Bréau in the most delightful of surroundings, having made many warm and enduring friendships among the neighbours, and our house has become the homestead of the family, who come over frequently.

Le Bréau
September 29, 1929

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